[29 cont.]

*756 When the woman becomes pregnant, the spirit puts up with the situation without getting angry, but it does not show any such 633 patience if she delays a length of time in the sexual act with her 834 husband, or if she sleeps by his side throughout the night.

The female shaman's obligation, in the sexual aspect, goes to the length of forcing her to be but a passive entity during coitus, not permitting her body the slightest motion and also not permitting any endearments from her husband before the sexual act. When these dispositions are disobeyed, the shaman finds [787] herself suffering during the night from especially terrifying and horrible dreams which fill her with fears and anxieties.

*756 The man who marries a shaman gets to understand his 693 wife's situation, and for this reason he is prudent in his actions: He does not demand anything but the strictly indispensable, and he is in accord with her in all matters related to her special state. [30]

*756 But in spite of all these prohibitions, the female shaman 776 who becomes pregnant receives aid from the spirit at the time 844 of giving birth. This assistance consists of an easy delivery of her baby and of counsel her spirit gives her on the simplest form of giving birth, the remedies she should take, etc.

*756 The shaman must not perform ceremonial acts of curing ●841 when she is in her menstrual period because the patient will be- 843 come worse instead of improving. However, pregnancy does not present any obstacle to her activities, and she may accomplish cures during the entire period of gestation.

*756 In the case of a male shaman, the spirit permits him to be 834 with his wife, but for a very short time; he is also allowed, as [595] are the rest of the Guajiro, to have several wives.

In summary, women shamans must cohabit exclusively with their husbands, avoiding all endearments, movements, the prolongation of coitus, and pregnancy. They may not exercise their functions during their menstrual periods. The male shaman also must be moderate in the sexual aspect and limit himself to his wife, or wives, as the case may be.

*756 The food taboo is limited to prohibiting the shaman from 262 eating the flesh of such animals as he has received in payment

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
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ought not to have children. The spirits can show her various magical tricks to avoid this, but if she should become pregnant, she can count on the spirit's help in labour. Not even the male piache is allowed to partake of love more than fleetingly, almost casually. There must be no real affection involved.

A woman piache cannot practice during menstruation. No piache may eat meat from animals he has received in payment for his services. These, like other gifts, he does not enjoy, but he can give them to his sons. Nor is he allowed to eat meat from animals sacrificed at funerals or such feasts. While invoking or conjuring spirits he should restrict his diet to maize gruel.

A piache can cure all, but not himself. Sometimes, perhaps, a sympathetic spirit may give him a little advice, which will always help; but if he falls seriously ill, he summons a colleague, who performs the usual sorcery. When a piache dies, his rattle, diadem and other attributes are chopped up and buried in some remote and secret place. The dead piache's soul roams like those of all mortals and often clings to the burial place, but it is never alone, being always in company with its guardian spirit. Both can later help a new piache.

The medicine man is thus called to his profession by revelation and no attention is paid to sex, social position or age. Women have been magicians in Guajira from of old, as is shown by their myths. The piache belongs to two worlds: those of man and of the spirits. He has not chosen to belong to them and must continue in both. He is the intermediary between these two worlds, but nowadays his influence is dwindling. As civilization penetrates the peninsula, the part he plays is becoming less and less important.

The first really great piache was Umaralá, of whom the Indians relate the following:

In the olden days there were plenty of piaches who took big fees, but did little. Umaralá made his cures with secret remedies and with songs accompanied on his maraca rattle. He lost his mother early, but was adopted as her own by his maternal aunt, who also considered all her possessions his.